



Whatcom County Health Department Workforce Development Plan

Like public health agencies nationwide, the Department is dealing with increasing public demands, adverse economic conditions and a shrinking workforce. The Department now, more than ever, needs to recruit, train, develop, and retain a highly qualified workforce that can efficiently provide quality services.

The purpose of this document is to establish a comprehensive workforce development plan for the Whatcom County Health Department. It also serves to address the documentation requirement for the Public Health Accreditation Board Accreditation Standard 8.2: *Assess staff competencies and address gaps by enabling organizational and individual training and development opportunities*. To meet this accreditation standard, the Department must provide:

1. A workforce development plan that includes nationally adopted core competencies and training schedules;
2. Documentation that the workforce development plan has been implemented; and
3. Documentation of leadership and management development activities in the past two years.

For related information regarding requesting and authorizing training and continuing education, refer to the New Employee Checklist ([..\1. Hiring and HD orientation\Checklists\New Employee Checklist 01.07.13.docx](#)).

A. Plan Statement

The Department is committed to developing a competent workforce with the skills and experience needed to carry out our mission. Workforce development is a vital component of the Department's comprehensive strategy to achieve agency-wide quality improvement. Fundamental to this work is identifying gaps in knowledge, skills and abilities, and addressing those gaps through targeted training and development opportunities.

The Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals (Core Competencies) are a set of foundational skills desirable for professional engaging in public health. The Core Competencies can be used in assessing workforce knowledge and skills, identifying training needs, and developing workforce development and training plans. For more information on the Core Competencies, you may consult:

[Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals, Council on Linkages, Academia and Public Health Practice, 2014](#)

B. Implementing Procedures

1. **Evaluation and Tracking.** Employees will complete the following tool to assess core competencies:
 - a. **Core Competency Self-Assessment.** Each employee will complete the Core Competency Self-Assessment appropriate as below:

[Tier 1: Frontline staff / Entry Level](#)

[Tier 2: Program Management/ Supervisory Level](#)

[Tier 3: Senior Management/Executive Level](#)

Use the above link to access the appropriate self-assessment and save it to your computer. Complete the assessment electronically and save your completed assessment on your computer.

- b. Individual Learning Plan.** Employees will work with their Program Supervisor to ensure that his/her training requirements are met and to set learning goals based on the above Self-Assessment. This process is documented by the [Individual Learning Plan](#) form which should be started by the employee individually and completed in consultation with his/her supervisor.

Note: The assessment of Core Competencies and Individual Learning Plan focuses on training and development, not performance evaluation. This process is consistent with Public Health Accreditation (PHAB) Standard 8.2, which states *“This should not be a punitive process but one that identifies needs for employee training or education. This approach can provide workforce development guidance for the individual and may point out gaps in competencies and skills for the health department.”*

- 3. Training Schedule.** To see the Department’s identified mandatory training needs and scheduling, see the Department’s Training Matrix ([..\2. Professional Development\WCHD Training Matrix.xlsx](#)).
- 4. Roles and Responsibilities.** The following table lists individuals responsible for the implementation of this workforce development plan as well as the associated roles and responsibilities.

Who	Roles and Responsibilities
All Employees	Ultimately responsible for his/her own learning and development. Work with Supervisor to develop a learning plan that meets his/her individual as well as agency-based needs. Identify opportunities to apply new learning on the job.
Health Director	Responsible to the Board of Health for workforce strategy, priority setting, establishment of goals and objectives, and establishing an environment that is conducive to and supportive of learning.
Program Managers	Responsible to the Health Director for all employees within divisions. Supports, coaches, and mentors supervisors and/or employees to assure that appropriate training resources and support structures are available within the division.
Program Supervisors	Responsible to the division Manager and employees to ensure that individual and agency-based training initiatives are implemented. Works with employee to develop an individualized learning plan and supports the implementation of the plan (i.e., time away from work, coaching, opportunities for application, tuition reimbursement).

- 5. Exceptions:** Exceptions to this policy are allowed in extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the Health Director.

C. Agency and Workforce Profiles

- 1. Agency Profile.** The Department’s profile—including our mission statement, guiding principles, location, population served, governance, and organizational structure is provided in the Agency Profile ([Workforce Development - Agency Profile.docx](#)).
- 2. Workforce Profile.** For the latest annual data on demographics of the Department’s current workforce, see the Workforce Demographics ([Workforce Demographics - August 2013.docx](#)).

D. Continuing Education Requirements. Multiple public health disciplines require continuing education (CE) for ongoing licensing/practice. Licensures held by staff and their associated CE requirements, are shown in the table below.

Job Title	CE Requirements
Environmental Health Specialist	RS or REHS – 1 per year for 1 st 3 years, then a total of 3 accrued during previous 3 years.
Public Health Nurse	45 hours, every 3 years
Social Worker	36 hours, every 2 years
WIC Nutritionist	75 hours, every 5 years and 7 hours of AIDS education and training

Review of Plan. This Workforce Development Plan will be reviewed at least once every three years. The attachments will be reviewed annually and updated as needed. The Office Coordinator is responsible for maintaining the plan.